

83-0713

3 February 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
Executive DirectorFROM:
Chief, Planning Staff

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SUBJECT: Proposed National Council on
International Research and
Manpower

1. Attached, for your information, are informal comments (Tab A) by the CIA Coordinator for Academic Affairs on a proposal by the Director, Office of Planning and Evaluation, Executive Office of the President, to establish a National Council on International Research and Manpower. This proposal, forwarded to the DCI by the IC Staff (Tab B), may be placed on SIG(I), SIG(FP), or SIG(DP) agenda and may result in a request for financial support by the Agency.

2. The Coordinator recommends support for this new organization and cites some of the advantages and problems associated with current support to a similar organization -- the National Council for Soviet and East European Research.

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Attachments

cc: DDI
Comptroller
D/OEXA

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12 January 1983

There is no question but that the aim of the Task Force -- fostering closer ties between the federal government and US universities in the areas of international relations research and training -- are desirable. The IREX paper entitled "Foreign Area Research in the National Interest: American and Soviet Perspectives," which I passed to you a few months ago, dramatically contrasted the number of individuals operating or being trained as foreign affairs specialists in this nation and in the Soviet Union. Funding from traditional sources for foreign affairs research in the US is down, graduate students are turning to other disciplines, and we need to do something to reverse this trend if we are to continue to have both the requisite numbers of high quality scholars in the universities to perform research or act as consultants for us and an adequate supply of well-trained recruits for future Agency needs.

Probably the only way to evaluate the Task Force proposals is to examine the record of the National Council for Soviet and East European Research (NCSEER) which, as the Task Force points out, serves as a model for the proposed National Council on International Research and Manpower (NCIRM). (The NCSEER would, as indicated in the introduction to the attached report, be absorbed into the broader NCIRM and the latter would direct research and encourage training for specialists in all major geographic areas of the world.)

I talked with representatives of both SOVA/DDI and the Eastern European Division of EURA/DDI. Both groups seemed pleased with the reports received from NCSEER since its creation in 1978. The selection of proposals to be funded was, according to the SOVA analysts who had seen the complete list of submitted proposals, well done and in accord with Agency requirements. Additionally, the trustees of NCSEER have been cooperative in working with our people, not only making available to them the list of rejected proposals but also offering to broker introductions to the unsuccessful bidders if CIA were interested in funding some of their proposals as individual research contracts. An earlier attempt by the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies to act as intermediary between the Agency and researchers in academe was far less useful to us than has been the recent effort by NCSEER.

During testimony last September before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Vladimir Toumanoff, Executive Director of NCSEER, stated that CIA analysts had evaluated 25 of the Council's reports on two counts, quality of research and usefulness. Twenty one of the reports, he claimed, were judged "good" or "excellent" on both counts.

I believe I am correct in reporting that the DCI contributed funds to the NCSEER in 1981 and again in 1982. In 1981, the Trustees of NCSEER, aware of traditional sensitivity in the academic community regarding acceptance

of money from intelligence organizations, consulted with university presidents, chancellors and other senior university officers. Following these consultations, the Trustees voted unanimously to accept the funds from the DCI. Scholars and institutions involved in Soviet or East European studies were subsequently informed of this decision and only one scholar, out of several hundred contacted, chose to withdraw from further participation as a result of the Trustees' action.

The NCSEER experience has revealed some distinct advantages that, presumably, would accrue also to the proposed NCIRM. There has been a saving in the cost of research, due in large part to centralization in the administering of the research program over decentralized individual contracts administered by government action officers. Additionally, the NCSEER, by careful selection of its Trustees, has created an organization of specialists who are probably unequalled in government in their ability to review critically and demand excellence in both the proposals and the finished reports. The generally high marks given the reports by our people tend to support this view.

There are some problems that have arisen in the brief history of the NCSEER which may be repeated if the NCIRM is created and an additional one that I believe could arise in the case of the proposed expanded Council. The NCSEER has had problems with funding -- there is no assurance from year to year as to how much will be available from the participating government agencies. This causes heartburn and worse within the group of possible researchers. This problem will undoubtedly be around to plague the NCIRM as well unless -- or until -- Congress accepts the mandate to provide the necessary funds on a continuing basis.

Secondly, the NCSEER has focused almost all its energies on research to the virtual abandonment of academic training, which, according to the original concept, was a second major reason for creation of the NCSEER. The government agencies may need to insist on some re-direction of effort on the part of the proposed larger organization if we are to get all that is promised in the stated goals.

Finally, I believe that we will have a problem with the new and broader organization that we did not face in dealing with the NCSEER. There is a great amount of rapport evident between Soviet and East European specialists on the campuses and their opposite numbers in intelligence. Perhaps this is due to the closed societies with which both are dealing. This close rapport is less widespread when we move to academic and government analysts interested in Western Europe, the Far East and, particularly, in the Third World. I predict that there will be considerably more opposition to accepting money from intelligence organizations in the proposed NCIRM than was apparent in the NCSEER. This does not mean we will necessarily be excluded from participating in the funding but I would not be surprised if a number of prestigious scholars chose not to submit research proposals or otherwise participate in the work of the expanded Council.

On balance, I support creation of the new organization and our participation in funding it for at least the first few years. The NCSEER has been useful, according to our own analysts, and the NCIRM could be of similar value to our analytic effort. The stated goals of the organization are well worth supporting. If the new Council works as well as the existing one, we should profit; if it doesn't work well, the organization will collapse of its own weight within the first few years and we can all go back to the drawing board.